

WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR JEFFERSON COUNTY MONTANA

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Introduction:

Pursuant to the Montana County Weed Control Act found in Montana Codes Annotated 7-22-2101 through 7-22-2153, The Board of County Commissioners of Jefferson County by Resolution 17-96 provided for organization and administration of the Jefferson County Weed District.

The Jefferson County Weed Board is granted certain powers and charged with certain duties under section 7-22-2109 of the County Weed Management Act. The Board is required to administer the District's noxious weed program, establish management criteria for noxious weeds on all land within in the district, make all reasonable efforts to develop and implement a noxious weed program on land owned by a federal agency.

The section provides that the District Weed Board may employ personnel, purchase chemicals, material and equipment and pay the cost necessary for an effective weed management plan. All cost of operation of the Weed District is to be paid out of a noxious weed fund authorized by section 7-22-2141 of the Montana Code.

The District may enter into agreements with state and federal agencies that will promote economical and comprehensive weed control on all lands within the county.

To carry out its duties and responsibilities under the Montana County Weed Control Act the Jefferson County Weed District will conduct its operations by the Weed Management Plan for Jefferson County. No part of this management plan is to conflict with the County Weed Management Act.

Part 1 Overview of Jefferson County:

Jefferson County is considered part of southwestern Montana. It has an approximately 1,056,158 acres. Fifty five percent is controlled by the Federal Government and about three percent is owned by the State of Montana.

The county has a very dynamic economic and population base. The northern portion is increasing as a suburban area for the city of Helena. Ranching and mining make up the industrial and agricultural base.

Mountainous terrain makes up most of land. There are broad river valleys through which flow the Jefferson River, Boulder River and Whitetail Creek. The ranching lands are mostly in the Boulder River Valley, the Jefferson River Valley and Whitetail Creek area.

DRAFT

Part 2 Duties and Responsibilities of the District

The Weed District will endeavor to provide service to the residents of the county and protection of the land by developing a General Weed Management Plan with the following policies and provisions:.

- A. The District will formulate policy and regulations for the management and control of noxious weeds on county, public and private lands
- B. Technical assistance may be provided to individual residents, agricultural, industrial and governmental interest to aid in safe and efficient management and control of noxious weeds.
- C. It shall be the policy of the Weed District to enforce the section 7-22-2116 of the County Weed Management Act by first working with the landowner by establishing and implementing a management system for weed control. Should these efforts not succeed the District may take any action it deems appropriate or permissible by law.
- D The District may establish programs to assist in the cost of weed control and provide equipment to encourage good stewardship of the land

It is the duty of the Weed District Board to employ personnel necessary to fulfill its obligations under the Weed Control Act. It is also their duty to review and supervise the finances of the district.

- E. The general plan may establish weed management areas or zones to address weed problems. These areas may be based upon the following: geographic areas, habitat or sensitive plant or animal considerations, urban and subdivision areas, mineral, agricultural, and forestry, or other areas of concern.
- F. The District will use an integrated management approach to weed reduction and control in Jefferson County.

Part 3. Goals of the Weed District:

Preventing the spread of noxious weeds is the first goal of the Weed District.
The District will encourage good land stewardship and land use.

- B .The District will provide for control and work to prevent the spread of noxious weeds on County owned lands and right-of-ways.
- C. The District may advise on weed control methods that may be used on a weed site. The goal is the appropriate and safe use of herbicides or other methods of weed control.
- D . To protect sensitive areas, the District will work with land owners and government agencies to identify special ecological, topographic or habitat areas that may require specialized weed treatment or prevention.
- E. The District will endeavor to identify areas for intensive weed management that

have potential of weed eradication.

- F. Public awareness of problems caused by noxious weeds is an essential step in a management program. The district will make available to citizens of Jefferson County information on appropriate control methods that may be useful in working on their weed problems. Safe and proper use of herbicides will be stressed in all information.
- G. Where appropriate, the district will develop effective weed management programs and combine efforts with State and Federal agencies.
- H. The District will work with landowner and agencies to develop funding for treatment projects or special control areas.
- I. Policies and procedure will be formulated as guidelines to reduce the movement of weed seed in forage. Purchasers of forage will be asked acquire feed that is certified weed seed free. The board will work with local feed producers to gain voluntary compliance with the weed seed free program.

Part 3. Methods and Procedures:

- I: Weed control on county, municipal, state and federal lands.
 - A. The county weed coordinator, with the advice and consent of the board, may employ a contractor or staff to apply weed treatment on county roads, right-of-ways, service areas, or other lands designated as having public interest.
 - B. The District will meet with the administration of the municipalities in the county to set the needs and priorities for weed control and prevention within the boundaries of the cities.
 - C. To prevent weed problems on other public roads, the District will endeavor the to work with the Montana Department of Transportation, National Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to identify areas of concern that require treatment.
 - D. The District will endeavor to maintain a working relationship with state agencies having land interest in the county. There should be a yearly review of weed control plans and activities. In the interest of efficiency and resource use, the District will endeavor to inform other agencies of weed control projects in their area.
 - E. The District may enter into assistance agreements; participate in grants or interagency agreements that will benefit the land resource and the private landowners of the county.

II: Weed control on private lands:

To aid in providing appropriate and economical weed control, the District will assist property owners and agencies in setting up weed management plans.

- A guideline for a weed manage plan should include information on the weed species of concern, location of the property, location of water courses and wells, a statement giving the planed herbicide and rate of usage, a list of available equipment that may be used or how application will be made, an explanation of other control methods that may be

employed. The plan should also provide information as to the storage and safe keeping of any unused herbicide.

These management plans will aid the District to determine specific problem areas and major infestations, avoid the misuse of herbicides, provide for weed control in sensitive areas and habitat. Management may be used to obtain funding for special management zones.

- B. To encourage weed control measures, the District plans to maintain a 50/50 cost share program on herbicide purchases. There will be a limit of \$1,500, per calendar year and not more than \$6,000, in a four year period. Application equipment may be made available to county residents to aid weed control on small land holdings.
- C. Location and identification of weed infestations is an essential step in weed control. Landowners, agencies, schools, groups or associations are to be encouraged map infestations and report them to the District. This inventory will be used to:
 - 1. Identify sensitive areas such as plants and special wildlife habitat.
 - 2. Aid in developing an appropriate treatment method
 - 3. Aid in the creation of a special management areas
 - 4. Investigate and/or locate weeds on the state category 2 and 3 weed list.
- D. The District will encourage research and monitor alternative methods of weed control such as biological, revegetation, mechanical or cultural methods.
- E. Public participation and awareness is essential part of an Integrated Weed Management Program. The District will provide technical assistance to the county residents when requested. There will be plans to set up program that will address the needs of the small acreage landowner. The District will endeavor to provide training to meet the landowner licensing requirements.
- F. To aid in the prevention of weed seed movement, the district will encourage forage buyers to acquire hay that is certified as weed seed free. Buyers will be asked to inform the district about feed that coming from other counties or from other states.
- G. The District will set forth a policy under the provisions of sections 7-22-2126 of the Weed Control Act and section 80-7-903 of the Weed Seed Free Act to guide the movement of forage in and out of the county.
- H. The district will require all the lands within a subdivision to be included in a weed management plan. The Weed Board may require specific management procedures depending on the size of the subdivision, weeds of concern, or other environmental considerations.
- I. Compliance: County residents will be encouraged to comply with Montana code 7-22-2123. If necessary the weed coordinator will follow the procedure as set forth in the noncompliance section of the law.

Part 4: Priorities of the District

This Weed Management Plan establishes the work order for the District and will be followed as much as the allotted budget will allow.

I Priorities for weed treatment

Treatment of county property, road right-of-ways, service areas, and lands designated by the county as having special public interest.

B. Advise and assist landowners with weed control on their property

C Treatment with the goal of eradication any weed species on Montana's Category 3 noxious weed list.

D. Prevention of weed infestations in environmentally sensitive areas.

E. Intensive treatment and management of areas identified as having the potential for weed eradication.

II. Priorities for weed management:

Work with landowners within the District to develop and implement a noxious weed management plan for their property.

Inspect property and enforce weed management agreements of subdivisions and compliance with the County Noxious Weed Control Act.

Support the development of biological agents and determine the areas with the highest probability of establishment of biological control.

Establish and or participate in educational programs.

1. Teach the safe and appropriate use of herbicides
2. Plant identification
3. Good land stewardship.

Part 5 Weeds of concern within the county:

Currently the known distribution of noxious weed in Jefferson County is based on "Section Based Mapping and GPS located bio control releases.

The section based mapping shows that a noxious weed species is known to exist in a particular section. The GPS points say only where a release of bio agents was made.

Weeds of concern in Jefferson County are:

Dalmatian toadflax - *Linaria genistifolia* . This weed is a major problem in 24 townships ranging from the northern part of the county southward to the middle of the county. It is also being found in the south central sections along Interstate 90.

Canada Thistle – *Cirsium arvense*. Canada thistle is common in most areas of the county. It is found along road and in meadows. The plant is increasingly found in forested areas and areas not maintained in subdivisions.

Spotted knapweed – *Centaurea malculosa*. Spotted knapweed is common in all parts of the county.

Diffuse knapweed. – *Centaurea diffusa* . Diffuse knapweed is not wide spread but can be found along the BPA power line road in the South Elkhorns There are small spots in the Clancy area west in Lump Gulch.

Russian knapweed – *Centaurea repens*. This knapweed is mainly in the southern part of the county around Whitehall and in the moist soils along the Jefferson River. Small plots have been found in the Montana City area.

Leafy spurge – *Euphorbia esula*. Leafy spurge is an increasing problem in all parts of the county. There are dense infestations in the southern parts of the county and increasing infestations around the Lump Gulch area on federal and private lands. Leafy spurge is also present in the eastern area (Cabin Gulch) on private and federal lands.

Yellow toadflax – *Linaria vulgaris*. Yellow toadflax is increasing in the gravelly soils in the Pipestone/Homestake areas and east to Whitetail creek

Field bindweed – *Convolvulus arvensis* - Some fields in the Whitehall area has a problem with the weed.

DRAFT

Sulfur cinquefoil - *Potentilla recta*. There are reported small infestations in the center of the county starting in Township 5N 4W . More searching needs to be done.

St. Johnswort – *Hypericum perforatum*. There are isolated spots of this weed on the top north side of Boulder Hill. It can be found on both sides of the interstate.

White top (hoary cress) – *Cardaria draba*. Whitetop is found in the disturbed ground along highways and in subdivisions. In agricultural land, Whitetop is increasing found on high impact areas used by livestock?

Category 2 weeds reported or located in the county.

A. Dyer's woad- *Isatis tinctoria* - There is a possible sighting of the plant along some roads west of Montana City. More searching and plant identification needs to be done in the area.

B. Tall buttercup – *Ranunculus acris*. Tall buttercup has been identified in a riparian area south of Boulder and the Crystal Creek area. The Boulder river area has been treated with herbicide. Monitoring of the area is necessary to check for more plants and prevention.

The majority to the weed treatment will be applied on the knapweeds, Leafy Spurge and Dalmatian toadflax. These constitute the major problem weeds in the county.

Landowners and residents will be encouraged to report plants that are unknown to them. This will aid the location of plants that may fall into the category 2 or 3 noxious weed list.

DRAFT

Appendix - A

Cost Share Guidelines:

The County cost share program may be made available for the purchase of herbicides to be applied on lands within the county for of control weeds listed on the State Noxious Weed List.

Cost share will be limited to \$1,500.00 per land owner during one calendar year and a limit of \$6,000.00 in a four year period. Any landowner may apply to the Weed Board the reenter the program after a one year break.

Cost Share will not be available to landowners who may be obtaining herbicide cost share under a grant or other programs unless approval is given by the County Weed Board.

Users of the program must own or manage lands within the county and provide a Weed Management Plan for the property.

The management plan will include the following:

- Owner of record and contact person

- Legal description of the property.

- List of water wells and their depths

- Map of the property showing water courses, wet lands, and any areas with sensitive habitat or vegetation.

- A list of the weeds to be controlled and their approximate location on the property.

- A brief narrative stating the control methods planned.

- Provide a current license for the use of restricted herbicides or provide the license of the commercial applicator.

The County Weed Board may require the use of specific herbicides or other appropriate control methods is sensitive areas.

Jefferson County may allow landowners to post their land as a “No Spray Site.”

The following conditions will be met;

Proof there is a permanent resident on the property with medical sensitivity to herbicides.

The property contains special vegetation or habitat considerations.

Documentation is necessary.

The landowner has on file with the County Weed Board a weed management plan containing the following information:

(Information required in parts: a, b, c, d, may be combined into one map) plat or map of the property AND (legal description)

A Map detailing all right-of ways and entrance driveways on the property.

A map detailing the species, acreage, and location of noxious weeds on the property.

A map detailing any water courses such as rivers, streams, irrigation ditches, sloughs that traverse the property and enters adjacent lands.

A statement giving the normal wind direction at the property.

A detailed plan stating how weeds on the property will be controlled.

1 How the neighboring property will be protected.

2 Methods of control may be chemical, biological, mechanical, cultural or other documented methods approved by the board.

g. A signed letter from the Montana Department of Transportation stating and agreement with the control method to be used along state right-of ways.

The property will be posted with a sign of not less than 168 square inches with the wording “NO SPAY SITE”

A sign will be placed on each corner of the property. Along roads, a sign will be posted at each end of the property adjacent to the road and at any driveway leading on to the property.

5. The landowner agrees to inspection of the property should problems or complaints be filed.

6. The landowner agrees that the County Weed Board will order removal of any plant found that is listed on the State III noxious weed list in Categories II or III. (See appendix D) .

Appendix: C Movement of Forage within and Out of the District

Policy on the movement of forage within the district.

1: Sale or movement of forage from fields known to be infested with noxious weeds will be discouraged by informing the landowner and property manager of the weed problem and asking that the produce from these fields not be placed for sale or moved to other lands outside of the immediate area.

2: The landowner and manager will be informed by letter of section 7-22-2116 of the Montana County Weed Control Act which prohibits the propagation of noxious weeds on any land.

3: Should a complaint be filed with the district, the County Weed Coordinator shall determine the party making the sale and/or movement of the forage and the place of origin. As soon as possible and in consideration of the season, the County Weed Coordinator will inspect the field of origin. The investigation will follow the section governing noncompliance, 7-22-2123 as stated in the County Weed Control Act.

4: The District shall assist the landowner with the preparation of a weed management plan for the property and will implement the plan as soon as possible.

5: A landowner may ask the District to inspect the fields and stacking areas before harvest and clear the production from the field for movement or sale within the county. Forage that has already been harvested may be sampled for the presence of noxious weeds or the seed of noxious weeds. This procedure will not be considered as an inspection under the rules for Weed Seed Free status.

Policy on the movement of forage coming into or leaving the District.

1: The District recognized the need for some livestock owners to acquire forage from sources outside the county. It is the responsibility of the purchaser to obtain forage from areas and producers known to have minimum weed problems.

2. Landowners or livestock owners who import weeds and weed seed by the purchase of forage shall be considered in noncompliance and subject to the provisions of section 7-22-2123 of the Weed Control Act.

3 : An embargo may be placed on any forage entering or leaving the county if it is not certified by the state when there is a complaint or an investigation is requested by the county or Department of Agriculture. Such an embargo and release from an embargo will follow the provisions of sections 7-22-2126 of the County Weed Control Act.

Appendix D:

State of Montana Noxious Weed List:

Category 1

Canada Thistle
Field Bind weed
Common Tansy
Dalmatian toadflax
Yellow toadflax
Leafy Spurge
Houndstongue
St. Johnswort
Diffuse knapweed
Spotted knapweed
Russian knapweed
Oxeye Daisy
Whitetop Complex

Category 2

Dyers Woad
Meadow Hawkweed
Orange Hawkweed
Perennial pepperweed
Purple Loosestrife
Tall Buttercup
Tansy Ragwort
Saltcedar

Category 3

Yellow Starthistle
Common Crupina
Rush Skeletonweed
Yellow Iris
Eurasian Water Milfoil